

From Your Pastor

A Study of the Shorter Catechism: The Duty God Requires of Man

Question 39: *What is the duty which God requireth of man? Answer: The duty which God requireth of man, is obedience to his revealed will. (Micah 6:8; 1 Sam. 15:22)*

Question 40: *What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience? Answer: The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law. (Rom. 2:14,15; 10:5)*

Scripture Memory: *“Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day!” (Psalm 119:94)*

An Explanation: *In our study on the Shorter Catechism so far (Q&A 1-38) we have learned how God the Father has authored the salvation of His people, and how Christ has accomplished it in His life, death, resurrection and ascension. We now look at the application of our redemption by the Holy Spirit. In order to focus our attention on God’s righteousness, our need for Christ the Savior, and what the Spirit writes on the heart of believers, we will now learn about God’s law.*

The question that every person must answer is: “How can I be made right with God?” *When the rich young ruler approached Jesus with this question, asking, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? (Luke 10:25), our Lord Jesus answered him with the permanent, perfect, universal standard that God has for every human being, revealed in His most holy law. “What is written in the law...?” Jesus asks pointedly. And the man rightly answered: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:26-27). Jesus replied: “You have answered correctly; do this, and you shall live” (Luke 10:28).*

In Holy Scripture, the Law is the duty God requires of man that is described summarily as a whole-hearted, selfless love for God and neighbor; a doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God (Mic. 6:8); a listening obedience to God’s wise instruction rather than a mere external sacrifice (1 Sam. 15:22). The Law of God summarized in the ten commandments is God’s revealed way to obey the true and living God, and the standard by which every human being will be judged. This perfect Law reveals God’s righteousness and holiness, and the requirements for entrance into heaven.

Though man ought keep God’s commandments, man cannot ever keep them perfectly due to his fall into sin (cf. Matt. 5:48), though he knows he should (Rom. 1:32; 2:14-15; 8:3-4). The good news of the Gospel is that what man could never do, God did for us in Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ has kept the commandments, and has fulfilled all the righteous requirements of the law so that sinners can be justified, freed and forgiven of all their sins (Acts 13:38-39). Jesus fills His people with the Spirit who writes the Law on our hearts and turns our duty to God into a delight in God!

Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

-Matthew 14:27 (ESV)